

Record

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BWA pullout OK'd by Exec. Comm.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP, ABP, and EthicsDaily.com) — By a 62-10 vote on February 17, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee approved a report recommending that the SBC withdraw from the Baptist World Alliance (BWA).

The report was a revision of one released in December by the Executive Committee's nine-member BWA study committee. This latest report was in keeping with the earlier one in that it also recommended withdrawal from the BWA. The report will be presented to messengers from SBC churches at the June 15-16 annual meeting in Indianapolis.

The revised report, in addressing "issues raised more recently," focused on three areas:

- The committee noted that various negative reactions to the initial report "that emanated particularly from fellow BWA member body representatives... served to demonstrate to all interested evangelicals why we had been experiencing increasing discomfort in attempting to define the SBC to the world through the BWA."

Some of the critics of the proposed SBC action "took the opportunity to vent what appears to be pent up feelings of hostility about our Convention. Due to these revelations, we need not now justify or vilify, but can simply do what we preferred to do in the first place, which is to politely withdraw from an organization that, at least for us, no longer efficiently communicates to the unsaved a crystal clear gospel message that our Lord Jesus Christ is solely sufficient for salvation."

- The committee commented on the BWA's acceptance of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), a breakaway organization critical of the SBC's conservative movement, by noting, "One soaked by a rain need not blame the last raindrop. We strongly affirm the right of the BWA to determine its own membership and affiliations. It is the very right we now recommend that our Convention exercise. The decision of the BWA to include the CBF merely served as a confirmation that we must, as a Convention, allow the world to see us without having to look through a BWA lens — a lens which, for us, has become too cloudy."

- The committee underscored that the proposed SBC withdrawal from the BWA "is not intended to cast aspersions upon the many godly and enthusiastically evangelical Baptist fellowships that are members of

the BWA. We fully intend to continue to partner with our oldest and best friends worldwide, and to develop new and vibrant friendships and joint endeavors to reach the world for Christ. Those who chose to cast this in any other way should not be allowed to dismay our Baptist brothers and sisters in Christ who long, as do we, to take a giant and unhesitant step forward in world outreach. For us, the decision is one of stewardship. If we can multiply the harvest by reapplying the funding, there is no true Christian who should take issue."

Responding to specific criticisms in the study committee report, Lotz said, "We are not anti-American, but we do represent the nations of the world in 211 Baptist conventions and unions," and he denied the BWA holds "aberrant theological views."

The alliance adheres to traditional Christian and Baptist views, he said, including beliefs that "unity is not a luxury but an inherent part of the Gospel" and "ethical behavior is one of the great witnesses to the truth of Christ."

Also addressed during the Executive Committee's meeting:

- A 2004-05 Cooperative Program Allocation budget of \$183,201,694 was adopted and will be recommended to the convention at the annual meeting in June.

The new budget will continue to allocate 50% of receipts to the International Mission Board and 22.79% to the North American Mission Board. The percentage allocated to the seminaries is 21.4%. According to the seminary enrollment formula, Southwestern Seminary would receive 5.18%; Southern Seminary, 4.42%; New Orleans Seminary, 4.38%; Southeastern Seminary, 4.08%; Golden Gate Seminary, 1.83%; and Midwestern Seminary, 1.52%.

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission would receive 1.49% of the budget, and .76% would go to the Annuity Board for its ministry to retired ministers whose annuities were underfunded during their careers.

The Executive Committee, encompassing the work of the convention between annual meetings

as well as the costs for each annual meeting, would receive 3.32% of the CP budget. The Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives would receive .24%.

- A 2004-05 SBC Operating Budget of \$7,975,000 was adopted and will be recommended to the convention in June.

- A two percent increase was approved for the Executive Committee staff salary structure, effective Oct. 1.

- Notice was given that Barry C. McCarty will serve again as chief parliamentarian during the June 2004 SBC annual meeting in Indianapolis.

- In response to a motion referred from the 2003 SBC annual meeting in Phoenix, a recommendation was approved for the Executive Committee to "continue to consider New York City in the deliberation process to select future cities for the site of the [SBC] annual meeting."

Mississippi pastor elected



Mark Anderson (left) senior pastor of Colonial Heights Church in Jackson, was elected chairman of the board of trustees corporate affairs committee of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention at their semi-annual meeting in Nashville on Feb. 9-10. Other committee officers that will serve with Anderson include vice chairman Jim Marrow (center), pastor of Taylor Ranch Church in Albuquerque, N.M., and secretary Kirk Casey, pastor of Calvary Church in Idaho Falls, Idaho. (BP special photo by Kent Hamilton)

The hour-long discussion was limited to Executive Committee members, but Denton Lotz, the BWA's general secretary, and several other BWA representatives were in attendance.

"We are saddened because the statements made in the recommendations presented to the Executive Committee are so contrary to who we are," Lotz said in a February 19 press release as reported by EthicsDaily.com, an Internet publication of the Baptist Center for Ethics in Nashville.

Lotz said the study committee report calling for the Southern Baptist Convention to leave the BWA contained "generalizations, guilt by association, statements out of context [and] misinterpretations of events."

Those characterizations, he said, "presented a very different picture than who we really are in the BWA."

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

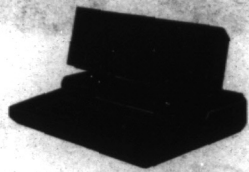
Directions

Just for the Record

Letters to the Editor

Sunday School Lessons

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No more pie in the sky

Just a few short years ago Mississippi's schools were on the bottom of virtually every list. Lowest teacher pay. Lowest test scores. Lowest expenditures per pupil. But now that's all changed. Thanks to gaming, Mississippi schools — and our kids — are moving up. It's not just good government. It's gaming. Mississippi Gaming Association advertisement in *The Clarion-Ledger* December 6, 1998

As many as 4,000 school jobs, including those of 3,000 teachers, are in jeopardy if the current public school budget recommendation holds firm, a state education official told local school district superintendents; "We are in trouble," Mildred McGhee, Wilkinson County superintendent, said. "Schools facing grim realities" *The Clarion-Ledger* February 14, 2004

Well, which is it? Has gambling literally saved Mississippi's public schools, or are 3,000 badly-needed teachers about to lose their jobs? Would someone in the political leadership of this state please have the courage to stand up and give us the truth?

We were told in the early 1990s that legalized gambling would deliver us from chronic education underfunding, poor highways, high unemployment, low-paying jobs, and a host of other ills that were holding back Mississippi. We were told that no child in search of a quality education would lack for modern facilities, up-to-date textbooks, and the latest technology equipment in every classroom. Legalized gambling would take care of all those problems, and so much more.

With golden dollar signs flashing in our eyes and blinding our judgment, we went along with the bright, shining lies even though we knew all along that they were lies (see alcohol, circa 1966). Somehow, despite our better instincts, the experiences of other

states, and just plain common sense, we thought it would be different for us. Perhaps greed is the best explanation for such mass neurotic behavior.

Now we face the bitter reality. No more pie in the sky. The pipe dreams were just that. The scam worked, and the con artists who pulled it off are laughing all the way to the bank.

Judy Rhodes, director of educational accountability with the state Department of Education, made it very plain in a meeting earlier this month with local superintendents (as reported in *The Clarion-Ledger* on February 14): "It's going to affect jobs in your school district. ...I want to make sure you understand the dilemma we're in," Rhodes said. "You must either reduce current services or raise local taxes. There is no other bottom line."

Reduce current services. Raise local taxes. No other bottom line. Does anyone recall those words being used in the glowing Mississippi Gaming Association advertisements like the one quoted above? That's not all the gamblers fail to put in their ads.

They forget about the shivering children locked in cars in casino parking lots while their parents spend paychecks at the tables of fortune. They don't show the pawn shop owner with an overflowing Mason jar of gold-filled teeth, pulled out with dirty pliers for a few dollars more to spend at the casinos.

Not every legislator voted in favor of legalized gambling, and not every legislator supports gambling today — but every legislator should be asked the question,

"I DON'T ATTEND CHURCH, BUT I DO VISIT THEIR WEBSITES — CALL ME AN 'E-MEMBER'!"



"Where did all the money go?" After all, we were promised many things that haven't happened.

Legislators can be contacted during their 2004 session, which is going on right now, at P.O. Box 1018, Jackson, MS 39215-1018. Telephone: (601) 359-3770. For individual e-mail addresses, go to www.ls.state.ms.us. Legislators can be contacted in their home districts on weekends and between sessions.

The price extracted from all of us by legalized gambling grows larger every day, both in financial terms and the devastating human toll. When will we notice?

GUEST OPINION:



*How we got here;
where we're going*

By Mark Kelly, member
Grace Community Church
Richmond, Va.

In succeeding years, the APA gradually edged toward removing homosexuality from the manual entirely. Once that was done, it was only a matter of time before governments were convinced to repeal or quit enforcing sodomy laws.

Some Americans still understand, however, that homosexual feelings are not normal, no more than sexual feelings for a child or an animal. Homosexuality is a mental illness, a disorientation with complex roots, often in painful childhood experiences.

While a person may not be at fault for having such feelings, homosexual activity is sinful because it involves a choice to reject God's plain intent in creation. The Apostle Paul links homosexuality to a person's choice to worship the creature,

rather than the Creator (Romans 1:20-32).

The U.S. Supreme Court says the individual's "right to privacy" includes the right to define who he is and the freedom to live according to that self-definition. It's a dangerous belief.

In *Roe v. Wade*, it got us abortion on demand, which has cost us the lives of millions of unborn children. In *Lawrence v. Texas*, it got us a federal override of state laws prohibiting sodomy. With the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, it got us a court-ordered right to homosexual marriage, a move that threatens to spread rapidly across the country.

That idea — that each individual is free to live out his own self-definition — also will

eventually get us pedophile liberation. Indeed, that process already has begun. Activists are pressing to lower the age of consent in the United States like it has been in Europe. The mass media are busy turning girls and boys into sex objects at ever-younger ages.

The APA already has revised its diagnostic manual to say that pedophile feelings aren't a mental disorder unless the feelings distress the person or prevent him from functioning socially. Sound familiar?

Christians too often are silent when they need to be speaking the truth in love, but great numbers of us need to have the courage to tell the truth about the emperor's new, rainbow-colored clothes.

If you don't want America to make a serious mistake, you must act now to tell your local, county, state, and national lawmakers that you will not accept homosexual marriage in any form.

Kelly, news editor for the International Mission Board in Richmond, is the author of "Proof Beyond Reasonable Doubt: The End of Christian Apologetics," available only at kainospress.com. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

Missionaries appointed during Va. service

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — The earth teems with people who are hopelessly lost without Christ, and Christians must obey God's call to missions now because time is running short, several new missionaries told an audience attending a February 3 appointment service at Bethany Place Church in Richmond, Va.

The new workers were among 57 new International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries who shared how God called them to overseas service.

"My first volunteer mission trip was to a small community in Mexico," said one new worker who will be serving with her family in East Asia. "On a crowded, dusty and dirty street, God revealed to me the hopelessness of those without Christ. I knew then God was calling me to share His hope with the lost."

Her husband said he was influenced by a conference where a speaker spoke of the necessity of missions. "The final speaker spoke of the nations, and the Spirit grabbed my heart," he said. "My life changed in an instant as I realized my time on earth was short, and the lost were dying every day."

Another couple said their life plans were changed by the 9/11 terror attacks. "On Sept. 11, 2001, I was in a board meeting in downtown Manhattan when the world was changed forever, and so were our lives and plans," the husband said.

His wife added: "From the affluence of the Pacific Northwest to the poverty of unreached Asia, God has taken us from defiance to compliance, through reliance on Him."

Obeying God's call isn't always easy, but understanding how His heart breaks for the lost makes it easier, other new missionaries said.

"When I accepted Christ, I told God I would do anything except preach or be a missionary," said Chris Hortin of McLeansboro, Ill., who will serve with his family among Romanian people in Eastern Europe.

"I said, 'I won't.' I said, 'I can't.' I said, 'I'll try.' I said, 'I will.' He must increase, I must decrease."

"As a missionary kid in the Philippines, I dreamed about being a missionary when I grew up," said Hortin's wife Sue. Then as a young adult, I pursued my own goals and dreams — until one night on a busy L.A. freeway. God reminded me what He wanted for my life. I realized I was wasting time. It's time to go!"

"As a five-year-old, I stuffed care bags my family took to a migrant camp," said another young woman who will serve with her husband and four children in Southeast Asia. "As a GA memorizing Scripture, I learned more about missions. In a Philippine refugee camp, curious children watched as I taught English class. Now as a wife and mother, every sermon, lesson and song speaks to me to obey God's call."



READY TO SERVE — The International Mission Board's 57 newly appointed missionaries join in a time of prayer during a February 3 service at Bethany Place Church in Richmond, Va. (BP photo by Bill Bangham)

"Growing up, I was blessed to have parents committed to missions and a church involved in sending out people to share the Good News all over the world," said another new worker, who will serve with her husband in Central Asia. "Having people around me who understood God's passion for the world made it easy to submit to God's call."

Speaking to the last group of missionaries appointed before his retirement, IMB Senior Vice President Avery Willis urged the new missionaries to remember that the way they live out the Gospel is what people will remember, not the words they speak or even specific deeds they perform.

"When I first began pastoring, I figured out pretty quickly that people don't remember your sermons very long," said Willis. "In fact, when they talked about the preceding pastors, they never mentioned their sermons. Mainly they mentioned a life message. What was left was not words or even specific deeds but a life message."

"The apostle Paul went into Asia with this deep burden and love for the people, and there's nothing that will replace that. People will hear that message when you can't even speak their language. They can see and feel and sense your love."

Record

The missionary's ministry is not his own life but multiplying Christ's life into the hearts of others, Willis added.

"In Acts 20, Paul said he didn't consider his own life as worth anything except to proclaim the Gospel of God's grace," Willis said.

"You will do many other good things, but the ministry you go to do is to tell people that repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ is the way to get into heaven."

"You go not knowing what will happen there. We never know what's going to happen to us, but if we know who we're following, we know He is going to lead us and help us."

"The legacy you leave will not just be the individuals you touch, it will be the ones they touch, and the ones they touch, and the ones they touch — all the way out, long beyond your life."

"What your life message is going to be is what you can implant and give away to the people you go to serve," he said.

MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

**THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE**

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FamilyNet lands Fox

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — FamilyNet, the television broadcast subsidiary of the North American Mission Board (NAMB), will integrate Fox News Channel reports in its regular programming as part of a three-year strategic alliance with the network. The relationship, announced Feb. 12, gives FamilyNet access to 170,000 stories per year fed through Fox's NewsEdge service.

"NewsEdge will provide FamilyNet stories on American politics, business news and consumer issues, entertainment news, health and medicine and human interest features," said Bob Sutton, chief executive officer of FamilyNet. "Because Fox News' coverage has a commitment to represent all sides, this will be an excellent match for the FamilyNet viewing audience." The Fox News service is going to enhance the look and impact of FamilyNet in many ways "beginning with our live, daily programs 'At Home — Live' and 'Your Health,'" said Martin Coleman, vice president of programming for FamilyNet. "We will be able to keep our viewers more informed of issues important to them with some of the best resources and live breaking news coverage available on television." FamilyNet, based in Fort Worth, is a 24-hour television network airing more than 50 hours of original, values-based programs weekly that is available to 31 million households.



Looking back

10 years ago

Mississippi's casinos, led by Grand Casino in Gulfport, dominate the state's liquor purchases for the last half of 1993, according to figures released by the Alcoholic Beverage Control Division of the Mississippi State Tax Commission in Jackson.

20 years ago

Mississippi College in Clinton ranks in the top eight percent nationally among private baccalaureate institutions in the number of its graduates who go on to earn doctorates such as the Ph.D. and Ed.D degrees, according to two studies recently completed by professors at other institutions.

50 years ago

F. M. Purser, pastor of First Church, Oxford, retires after 30 years of service. When Purser came to Oxford, there were 325 resident members; at his retirement, the church had 900 members.

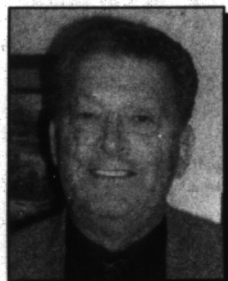
Nominees are announced for SBC posts

WOODSTOCK, Ga. (BP) — Bobby Welch, pastor of First Church in Daytona Beach, Fla., will be nominated as president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) during the June 15-16 annual meeting in Indianapolis. The announcement was made Feb. 20 by Johnny Hunt, pastor of the Atlanta-area First Church in Woodstock.

Welch has been pastor of the Daytona Beach congregation since 1974 and is the co-creator of the FAITH/Sunday School Evangelism Strategy widely used in Southern Baptist churches. He is a former president of the Florida Baptist Convention and a former SBC vice president.



Welch



Davidson

Gerald Davidson, pastor of the St. Louis-area First Church in Arnold for 27 years and a past president of the Missouri Baptist Convention, will be nominated for first vice president of the SBC at the June 15-16 annual meeting in Indianapolis.

Evangelist Bailey Smith made the announcement Feb. 19 at a Real Evangelism Conference hosted by Davidson and First Baptist Arnold. Davidson said it came as a bit of a surprise even though he knew he had been under consideration for the post in past years.

During his tenure at First Church Arnold, Davidson has seen membership at the church, located on the southern edge of St. Louis, grow from about 400 to more than 4,600.

Politics of homosexual marriage complex

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Last fall the Republican-controlled Wisconsin legislature passed a state constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage, only to see it vetoed by Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle.

A few months later the Republican-controlled Indiana Senate passed a state marriage amendment, but watched the Democratic speaker of the house declare it dead on arrival.

Nationwide, the battle over same-sex "marriage" has seen a split along party lines with Republicans supporting, but Democrats opposing legislation banning same-sex marriage:

- The Democratic National Committee (DNC) officially opposes a federal marriage amendment.

- DNC Chairman Terry McAuliffe has said an amendment would introduce "discrimination" into the Constitution. Republican National Committee Chairman Ed Gillespie has said his party "must pursue whatever policy is necessary" to protect the definition of marriage, including an amendment.

- The large majority of amendment co-sponsors in Congress are Republicans. Of the 100-plus House co-sponsors, more than 90% are Republicans. Of the eight Senate supporters, seven are Republicans.

- Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) has said he will support an amendment. Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) opposes it.

- The Democratic parties of Massachusetts and New York have gone on record as officially supporting same-sex "marriage."

There are exceptions to the rule, especially in the South and in regions with heavy Catholic populations, where some Democrats may favor an amendment. In addition, some Republicans are wary of tampering with the Constitution, even on the issue of marriage, and a handful favor same-sex "marriage." For the most part, however, the division holds.

"I think it's going to be a substantial division between the parties [during this year's election], but it's a complicated division," Stanley Kurtz, a contributing editor at National Review and a research fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution, told Baptist Press. "...Broadly speaking, the parties will tend toward one direction or another."

The division could be a deathblow to a marriage amendment, since it needs the support of both parties nationwide. It requires the votes of two-thirds of both the House and Senate and three-fourths of the states. For amendment supporters, getting Democrats onboard is a necessity.

"I think the prospects for a two-thirds vote in both houses are not nearly as certain as I would have said they were two or three or four years ago," Michael Barone, senior writer for U.S. News & World Report and coauthor of The Almanac of American Politics, told BP. "You've got to get a third of the Democrats to vote for it."

Could America be headed toward another cultural split between the parties, similar to what exists on the issue of abortion? Today the Republican platform is pro-life, the Democratic platform pro-choice. That division starts at the top — since 1980 every presidential campaign has seen a pro-life Republican running against a pro-choice Democrat — and extends down to local elections. There are, of course, many exceptions, but an abortion split is the general rule.

Barone, for one, believes same-sex



A continuing series of articles from Baptist Press

marriage is an issue that both parties would like to avoid.

"The Democrats think that the pro-gay marriage position or even pro-civil unions is probably unpopular with most Americans and very unpopular with some," he said. "The Republicans feel that if they seem to be making it an issue, they will be portrayed ... as bigoted, insensitive, cruel and so forth."

Ironically, the spotlight during this year's election could be on the two candidates for president, even though the president doesn't play a direct role in an amendment's passage. President Bush has not publicly endorsed an amendment but has reportedly told Republican lawmakers he eventually will. Sen. John Kerry, the likely Democratic nominee, opposes it.

Events on both coasts could force the issue. Kerry's home state of Massachusetts — the site of the Democratic National Convention later this summer — likely will begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples in May. Out west, the city of San Francisco has issued marriage licenses to same-sex couples in defiance of state law and has filed suit in state court

seeking to overturn California's ban on same-sex marriage.

Kurtz sees a situation in which same-sex marriage could become the defining issue of the presidential campaign.

"It's going to be probably as big as the war in Iraq," he said, "and there's even a scenario in which you could imagine it becoming the most important issue. The reason for that is because it's going to be impossible to confine the effects of this change to Massachusetts."

"Once same-sex couples are married in Massachusetts, should they travel to other states and move there — and they will do that — they will launch a series of lawsuits and that will mean media coverage."

If that happens, then Kerry's vote against the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act could become an issue. The law is intended to protect states from being forced to recognize another state's same-sex marriage.

The Defense of Marriage Act passed the Senate 85-14 and was signed by President Clinton. Same-sex marriage supporters want to see it struck down in federal court once Massachusetts begins issuing licenses to same-sex couples.

"I have not heard [Kerry] address substantively why the Defense of Marriage Act is a bad idea," Barone said.

Kerry's opposition to a marriage amendment to the Constitution also could become an issue, Kurtz said.

"Certainly neither candidate is going to be endorsing gay marriage," Kurtz said, "but having said that, there really is a very significant difference — particularly because if you're not willing to endorse an amendment."

"I think it's inevitable that we're going to get national gay marriage. So even though Sen. Kerry may say he does not favor gay marriage, I think without a national amendment we're going to get it."

Annuity Board's name change approved by SBC Exec. Comm.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The process of changing the Annuity Board (AB) name and expanding its ministry opportunities moved forward as the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee approved recommendations to amend the entity's charter and the charter of its affiliates during the committee's Feb. 16-17 meeting in Nashville, Tenn.

Executive Committee members unanimously approved a proposal to change the entity's name to GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention during their September 2003 meeting. Along with the original proposal, a recommendation to permit the entity to serve evangelical ministry organizations outside the SBC was passed.

The name changes of the Annuity Board and its affiliates and the amendments of the charters will require two successive annual votes of the convention to change the SBC bylaws, beginning at the June 15-16 meeting in Indianapolis. The original recommendation by the Executive Committee included a provision to allow the Annuity Board to begin using the new name after the first vote of the convention.

An Annuity Board statement to Baptist Press last fall described GuideStone as a composite word consisting of two words describing the board's goals: the Annuity Board intends to be a guide to walk alongside its participants throughout their lifetime, helping them enhance their financial security, while the word stone refers to the Annuity Board's enduring presence since its beginning more than 85 years ago.

The name is adapted from the term, "guide stone," which was commonly used in the Roman period as a directional, distance, and warning marker placed along Roman roads. The stones were set up beside the roads by explorers, leaders, and road builders to help those who traveled behind them.

The amendment to the ministry assignment of the Annuity Board would include other evangelical organizations in addition to the churches and denominational entities it already serves. Relief aid to retirees still would be exclusive to Southern Baptist ministers and denominational employees, but retirement plan programs, life and health coverage, personal investment programs, and institutional investment services would be open to others who qualify.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Recently, I was returning home to Jackson from a meeting in Portland, Oregon, and, of course, had to come through and change planes in the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport. When we arrived at DFW it was decked in winter beauty as it had snowed most of the night. In fact, it was still snowing when I got there. With the snow blowing in every direction, the terminals were packed with people. Folks were coming and going with most of them, like me, doing both in the process of changing directions.

As I went through the terminal I paused and watched as one plane had arrived and was unloading the passengers from a trip to Hawaii. It was an odd sight. Some of the folks were dressed in Hawaiian shirts, some in flip-flops and shorts, and most in some type of tropical garb. It was snowing and about 30 degrees as some of them headed outside. Boy, were they in for a shock! I mean a "knock your socks off" and "freeze your toes" kind of shock! They were not "dressed for success" in this environment! They not only looked odd, but would soon be pained by what they would face!

The Apostle Paul knew that the believer must be prepared to live in hostile environments. He knew that we need to be dressed right in order to survive in a world that was inhospitable! Therefore, he closes out his letter



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

to the church at Ephesus by saying in Chapter 6:11, "Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Before you and I go charging out into the weather of this world, whether it is at school, at work, in some social engagement, or even at home, we need to get dressed for success in our walk with God.

Three key ideas that I glean from Paul's instructions are:

1. We need to **dress totally**, or as Paul states it, "Put on the whole armor." Don't put on just part of the armor, for there is a completeness that is needed so that we will be ready and able to pilgrim through this world. Satan seems to be able to pick out the one area of our weakness and magnify our deficiencies and failures.

As Paul tells of the armor that is to cover the soldier of the Lord, he speaks of things like a shield of faith that will be able to quench fiery darts from the wicked one, or your loins gird about with truth, or having on the helmet of salvation, or car-

rying the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

If you carefully watch, whether in other believers or seeing your own life in the mirror, you might come to recognize that it is vitally important to let God fully and totally dress you in the armor that is needed for life and battle.

2. A second thought that I would project is that we must **dress spiritually**. What God is telling us in His Word is that you can't be ready in this life without having His input into the various areas of need. In fact, in the verses from Ephesians 6, Paul says, "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." We are in spiritual battle and must have spiritual covering. If walking with God and having His armor on will not protect you, nothing else will! But, know that it is totally sufficient and we can have confidence in Him and in our clothing.

I would point out that from a spiritual understanding, everything that we need God can provide, and everything that He provides only comes from His hands. You can't order it from a bookstore! You can't just sit down and decide to make yourself a good covering of clothes! God Himself provides each piece of covering and armament. So, we must look to Him to find the protection for battle.

3. The third thing that I would point out is that we should **dress victoriously**. Past the armament that Paul tells us that we should have, he says in Ephesians 6:19 that he wants to open his mouth boldly to make known the mysteries of the Gospel. The transformation that comes in lives because of the Good News from Heaven is a victorious, climactic, and wonderful experience. It is one that you and I have the privilege of participating in. In a sense Paul would say and I would encourage you (all of us), to get dressed, to get on mission for and with Jesus, to be busy about His Kingdom work, and let Him bring about the victories that He wants to among us.

Unlike the folks who were out of place and ill-prepared charging out into the snow-covered landscape with shorts and flip-flops, let us get dressed with the armament of God in order to engage in spiritual battle and glorious victory!

Have a great week!

NOBTS bivo music class open for enrollment

March 15 begins the fourth of eight courses at eight locations in Mississippi sponsored by New Orleans Baptist Seminary.

The eight courses are:

- Song Leading
- Worship Planning
- Reading Music: Rhythm/Pitch
- Reading Music: Harmony/Melody
- Hymnology
- Music Administration & Staff Relations;
- Survey of Music Resources
- Class Voice

These courses are designed to provide basic training for bivocational music directors and other music leaders in churches.

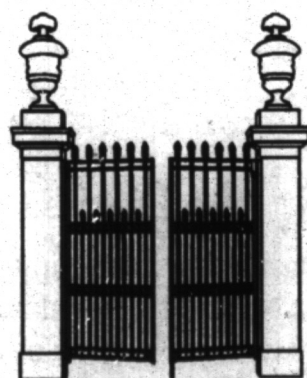
The eight courses meet two hours per week. Each course is eight weeks in length.

The cycle of courses is scheduled over a two-year period. Each course is independent and has no prerequisite. Each student who completes the eight courses earns a Church Music Certificate from New Orleans Seminary plus a credit of eight hours toward an on campus degree program. There is a one-time registration fee of \$25.00. The cost of each course is \$90.00.

A \$50.00 scholarship is available for all first-time students. Students already enrolled are not eligible. The grant is limited to one person per church.

The fourth course "Harmony/Melody"

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary



will meet once a week for two hours for eight consecutive weeks at the following locations and times:

• **Broadmoor Church, Madison** — beginning March 15 (7-9 p.m.) Jimmy McCaleb, Teacher, (H) (601) 924-1233.

• **Handsboro Church, Gulfport** — beginning March 15 (6:30 - 8:30 p.m.) Louis White, Teacher, (C) (228) 896-3796.

• **First Church, Booneville** — beginning March 15 (7-9 p.m.) LuAnne Ford, Teacher, (C) (662) 728-6272.

• **Northcrest Church, Meridian** — beginning March 15 (6:30 - 8:30 p.m.)

Buddy McElroy, Teacher, (C) (601) 681-6615, (H) (601) 679-1887.

• **Hernando Church, Hernando** — beginning March 15 (7-9 p.m.) Barry Tweedy, Teacher, (C) (662) 429-6361.

• **Tri-County Associational Building, Columbia** — beginning March 16 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) Kenny Adams, Teacher, (C) (601) 876-3436.

• **Meadville Baptist Church, Meadville** — beginning March 16 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) Chuck McMinn, Teacher, (C) (601) 384-5215, (H) (601) 384-3717.

• **Clarksdale Church, Clarksdale** — beginning March 15 (7-9 p.m.) Hugh Plunkett, Teacher, (C) (662) 624-2538, (H) (662) 627-3571.

These classes could be offered at other locations in the state also, where 8-10 students are interested in enrolling.

For more information, contact Jimmy McCaleb at Church Music Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3273 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 273. E-mail: jmcclaleb@mbcb.org.

Registration opening for SBC children

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Registration is now open for families who wish to enroll their children in the preschool childcare, the children's conference, or the youth Centrifuge from June 13-16 in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Indianapolis. For all information regarding registration, visit www.sbc.net and click on "2004 SBC Annual Meeting Pre-Registration."

Childcare for infants through children who have completed kindergarten will be available from Sunday afternoon through Wednesday. A \$10 one-time nonrefundable registration fee is charged for each child. For each session, a \$5 per child fee is charged, with a maximum charge of \$40 per family for the full four days of childcare.

Registration information may be obtained in one of three ways:

• e-mailing sndyosbrn@aol.com, including the sender's name and address.

• downloading a set of forms for each child at www.sbc.net.

• writing to SBC Childcare, Sandy Osborne, Ballwin Baptist Church, 15101 Manchester Road, Ballwin, MO 63011.

The postmark deadline for preschool childcare registration is May 21. Parents desiring to register their children after May 21 may print the required information and bring it to the conference, where they will be registered on-site on a space-available basis.

The SBC children's conference, meanwhile, will begin Monday morning. Kids ages 6-12 will have fun on actual playgrounds and in actual lessons during the course of the conference to register, visit www.sbc.net.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Robert Walker and Maurice Singh

Concord Church, Benton-Tippah Association, presented the Gerald C. Mauney Scholarship to Maurice Singh, India, January 25. He is a ministerial student at Blue Mountain College and was the guest speaker at Baptist Men's Day. Pictured (from left) are Robert E. Walker, pastor, and Singh.

The Brotherhood of Concord Church, Benton-Tippah Association, honored James D. Crawford as Man of the Year on Baptist Men's Day January 25. He was presented a plaque for his faithful service. Pictured (from left) are Crawford and Billy Tigrett.



James Crawford and Billy Tigrett

The Yalobusha Association will hold Youth Fest February 27 at 7 p.m. and February 28 at 6 p.m. at the Yalobusha County Multi-Purpose Building, Coffeeville. The evangelist is Shawn Davis, NOBTS. Christian Byrd and SEVEN WAITING will lead praise and worship. For more information, call (662) 675-8732.

Thomastown Church, Thomastown, will host Victory Bond in a gospel singing February 29 at 6 p.m. For more information, call (662) 289-7767.

Crossroads Counseling Center, Brandon, a ministry of Rankin Association, will hold Golfing for Families, the annual benefit golf tournament, May

6 at Bay Pointe Country Club. There is a shotgun start at 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. For more information, call (601) 939-6634.

Calvary Church, Pascagoula, will present Sacred Harp February 28 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This musical event emphasizes participation.

Morgan City Church,

Phillipston Church, and Sidon Church, all of Leflore Association, will hold Encouragement Sunday February 29 at Phillipston



Scott Vaughn, John & Ann Boggan

Church. The service begins at 11 a.m. with Bud Vance, pastor of Sidon Church, preaching; a covered dish will follow at noon; and singing by the Kilgore Sisters, Holcomb, begins at 1 p.m.

Josh Hunt, Sunday School and small group trainer, is coming to Tylertown Church, Tylertown, March 30 at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome to attend this You Can Double Your Sunday School seminar. There is no charge but a love offering will be taken.

For more information, call (601) 876-3436.

Coat Church, Magee, will hold Jericho March Conference every Monday in March at 7 p.m. featuring Dexter Trusdale, Lynsol Richmond, Clark Stewart, Ricky Moore, and Chad Grayson. William McWilliams is pastor.

Steep Hollow Church, Poplarville, will have a Wild Game Supper March 1 at 6 p.m. Professional fisherman Jim Phillips will be speaking. Bring your favorite wild game dish. Door prizes will be given. For more information, call (601) 795-4638.

Steele Church, Scott Association, recently held a note burning for paying off the family life building. Pictured (from left) are Scott Vaughn, interim pastor, John Boggan, former pastor, and his wife Ann.

HOMEcomings & REVIVALS

Calvary, Pascagoula: Revival Mar. 14-17; Sunday, 11 a.m., 6 p.m., dinner will follow; Mon.-Wed., noon, lunch will follow, and 7 p.m.; James E. Messer, speaker; Philip Willis, music; Johnny Beaver, pastor.

First, Mathiston: Revival Mar. 7-10; Sunday, 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Sonny Adkins, MCB, evangelist; Steve and Becky Carver, One Way Ministries, music; a love offering will be received.

First, Rosedale: Homecoming Mar. 7; 100th birthday; Sunday, 11 a.m.; lunch will follow; David

Sartin, former pastor; Charlie Cooper, former pastor, music; please RSVP to P.O. 437, Rosedale, MS 38769.

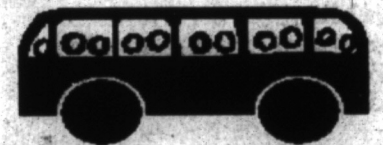
First, Winona: Revival Feb. 29-Mar. 3; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., noon and 7 p.m.; Jimmy Porter, MCB, evangelist; Graham

Smith, MCB, music; John L. Walker, pastor.

Steep Hollow, Poplarville: Revival Mar. 28-30; Sunday, 8:30 a.m., 9:45 a.m., 11 a.m., and 6 p.m.; Mon. and Tues., 7 p.m.; Danny Lanier, speaking; nursery provided; for more information, call (601) 795-4638.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD

Mt. Olive Church, Smithdale, held a WOM and WMU Christmas bible study and meeting recently.

The Mission Friends of Mt. Olive Church, Smithdale, had a birthday party for Jesus recently. They had cake, ice cream, and pizza.

Montevista Church, Eupora, held a dedication for the remodeling of their sanctuary February 1. James Bryant, Matt Buckles, MBCB, Curtis Guess, former pastor, and Jimmy Newland, former pastor, were guest speakers. A covered dish meal was served. John Windell Lancaster is pastor.



WMU & WOM of Mt. Olive Church, Smithdale



Mission Friends of Mt. Olive Church, Smithdale



Sanctuary Dedication of Montevista Church, Eupora

Moselle Memorial Church, Moselle, presented plaques of appreciation February 1 for 50 plus years in teaching Sunday School and service. Pictured (from left) are Troy Robinson, Faye Robinson, Clara Blanche Sellers, and Bobby Thompson.

The children of Moselle Memorial Church, Moselle, conducted Pennies for Lottie for six weeks during November and December. They had a contest between girls and boys and collected pennies and other change. Over \$400 was collected for the Lottie Moon Christmas offering. The children were rewarded with a pizza party.



T. Robinson, F. Robinson, C. Sellers, and B. Thompson



M. McDaniel & R. Bridges, pastor

Poplar Springs Church, Hazlehurst, will present the New Wine Quartet in concert February 29 at

McDaniel and his wife, Andrea, followed the evening service. McDaniel serves as minister to students and is a student at Leavell College, NOBTS. Pictured (from left) are McDaniel and Reggie Bridges, pastor.



10:30 a.m. Hubert Greer is pastor.

Pine Grove Church, Picayune, licensed Michael McDaniel to the ministry January 18. A reception and pound-

ing for Amity Church, Woodland, ordained J.R. Eaton to the ministry October 19. Eaton has been called as pastor of New Hope Church, Calhoun City. Pictured (from left) are Eaton and Gary Roberson.



J.R. Eaton and Gary Roberson



New Wine

Security Gifts

Can you make your current investments work harder? You can. By giving securities, or stocks you already own, you can contribute to the work that God is doing and avoid taxes that come when you sell your stocks.

If you currently have stocks, give the Mississippi Baptist Foundation a call to learn more about the savings available to you when you give stocks now or designate them to the Foundation in your Will. By doing this, you are able to contribute money to the area of the Lord's work you decide and receive tax savings. And, you can even continue to keep the income from your assets as long as you live.

God's word is filled with instructions to be good stewards of what is given us and for us to excel in the grace of giving. With planning, you can become a good steward. Call us at the Mississippi Baptist Foundation to let us tell you how. And remember, it is not how much you give, but the heart by which it's given. Even small gifts, wisely invested, can make a large difference and be used in God's future plans. Call us at (801) 292-3210.

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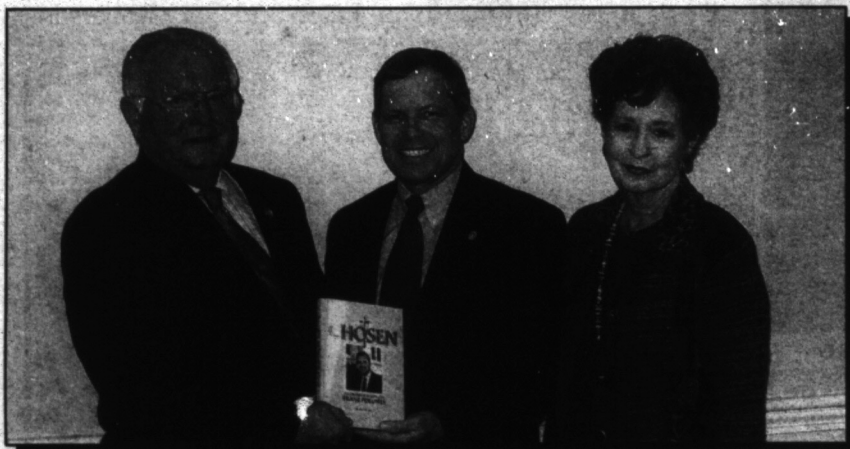
COLLEGE & SEMINARY NEWS



M.J. Gallop and Lewis Oswalt

M.J. Gallop is the recipient of the 2003-2004 Mississippi Baptist Church Music Conference, W.C. Morgan Memorial Scholarship. Pictured are Gallop and Lewis Oswalt, church music professor, Mississippi College. Gallop is a junior church music major.

The Mississippi College Department of Music invites you to a Homecoming Concert by the MC Singers February 29 at 6 p.m. at Northside Church, Clinton. The public is invited. Admission is free. The Singers will be returning



Bob Chain, Lee Royce, & Betty Sue Chain

STAFF CHANGES

Glade Church, Laurel, recently called McKay Pearce as minister of music and education. He comes from Stonewall Church, Mendenhall.

Park Place Church, Brandon/Pearl, welcomes Billy Hollingsworth as minister to preschool and children effective March 1. He

comes from Wynndale Church, Terry. Bob Dominy is pastor.

Park Place Church, Brandon/Pearl, called Conroy Ryan, Jr. as minister of maturity, missions, and ministries in August. He comes from the Madison-Chester Baptist Association, Jackson, Tenn.

from an appearance at the American Choral Directors Convention in Nashville, Tenn., and a multi-state choir tour. For more information, call (601) 925-3440.

William Carey College will host Career Fair March 25 from 1-4 p.m. in the Wilkes Dining Hall, Hattiesburg campus. WCC students and all looking for employment are invited to attend. Vendors include the Mississippi State Employment Service's WIN Center, Social Security Administration, MS Teacher Center, Stennis Space Center, Wesley Medical Center, Forrest General Hospital, Pine Belt Mental Health, Hattiesburg Clinic, Job Corps, WXXV-TV, Tower Loan, New York Life Insurance, Union Planters Bank, and several school districts throughout the state. Admission is free. Student Support Services will provide free drinks and pizza. For more information or if employers would like to reserve a booth, call (601) 318-6209 or visit www.ecampus-recruiter.com/wmcarey/.

William Carey College Theatre will present Georg Buchner's expressionist drama Woyzeck March 11-13 at 8 p.m. in the O. L. Quave Theatre, Hattiesburg campus. Seats may be reserved by calling (601) 318-6221. The box office will be open daily from 1-4 p.m. beginning March 8. Tickets are \$10, \$8 for senior citizens and military personnel, and \$5 for students.

Bobby and Betty Sue Chain, Hattiesburg, donated 200 books to the Mississippi College Church Related Vocation Students in the Department of Christian Studies. The book chosen was The Mission and Message of Frank Pollard, by Bob Pittman, Publisher of the Times-Petal and Advertiser News, Hattiesburg, and alumnus of Mississippi College. Pictured (from left) are Bob Chain, Lee Royce, MC President, and Betty Sue Chain.

Mississippi College School of Law will invest three new deans February 20 at 2 p.m. at the Old Capitol, Jackson. Presiding Justice William Waller, Jr. of the Mississippi Supreme Court will give the address. James Rosenblatt will become the seventh Dean of the Law School. Also invested will be Patricia Evans as Assistant Dean of Admissions and

Richard Bennett as Assistant Dean for Adjunct Faculty. The full academic pageantry of the ceremony will include members of the Mississippi College Board of Trustees, faculty of the Law School and the College, and key administrative officials. At Friday's ceremony Lee Royce, President of Mississippi College, will also recognize Judge Mary Libby Payne as Scholar in Residence and Harold Miller as Attorney in Residence.



Frazure

Don Frazure, a professional tenor who has performed throughout the US and abroad, will serve as vocal artist in residence at William Carey College, Hattiesburg. Frazure, who has performed in concerts and taught master classes at his alma mater, is a 1996 graduate of WCC and was awarded the school's Distinguished Young Alumnus Award in 2001.



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MINISTER OF MUSIC - RAYMOND ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH in Jackson, MS, is prayerfully seeking an individual for the full-time position of Minister of Music. Resumes and applications should be mailed to: personnel committee, Raymond Road Baptist Church, 4622 Raymond Road, Jackson, MS 39212. Rev. Tommy Anthony is pastor.

FREDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH is seeking to fill a position in the area of music ministry. Please send resume to Fredonia Baptist Church, attn: music search committee, 1616 CR 86, New Albany, MS 38652.

COVINGTON-JEFFERSON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION is now accepting resumes for the position of Associational Missions Director. Send resumes to Covington-Jefferson Davis Baptist Association, attn: personnel committee, 310 Hwy 35, Collins, MS 39428. Deadline for receiving resumes is 4/1/04.

JUST FOR THE RECORD

The RAs, GAs, and Mission Friends of Indian Springs Church, Jones Association, gave over \$442 to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. A missions banquet was held in December with

over 125 in attendance. Speakers were Harold and Joyce Watson, retired missionaries to the Philippines. The total offering given by the church was \$6,062.38. Mike West is pastor.

The GAs of Central Church, Little Yazoo, decorated a float for the Flora Christmas parade on December 6. The float theme was Missions Around the World.



GAs of Indian Springs Church, Laurel



Mission Friends of Indian Springs Church, Laurel

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March 6, 2004

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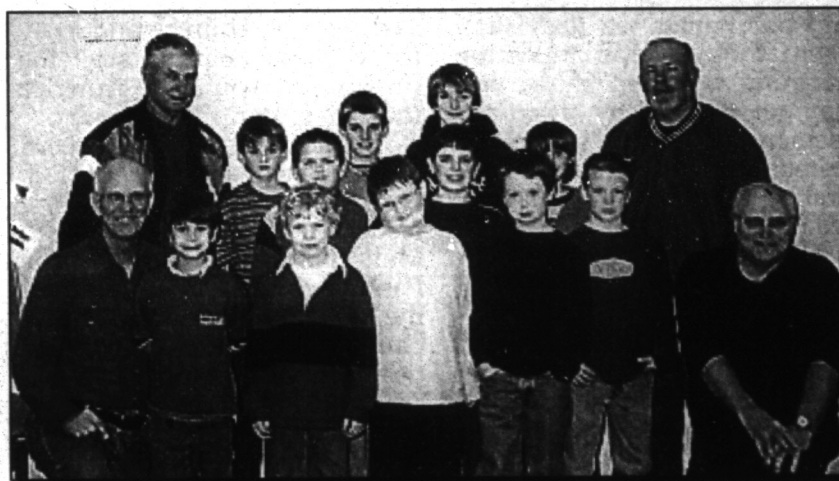
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RAs of Indian Springs Church, Laurel



GAs of Indian Springs Church, Laurel

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(I have sinned.)
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(I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

45 SIMPLE WORDS

Editor:

For all sorts of outrageous rulings, liberal ACLU-driven federal judges have cited the First Amendment as the basis for their rulings. There are 45 simple words in the amendment. I have read and re-read the First Amendment and have looked at it to see if I was missing something.

It may be because I will be 80 years old in April and only went through the 12th grade in school, but those 45 words don't tell me any of the following things these judges say it does:

- The moral majority must submit to the pervert minority.
- The taxpayers cannot honor God in public buildings and schools, even though we paid for them.
- The networks can put porn into our homes via television. Even though you may be watching a decent show, you may get shocked by an advertisement for Victoria's Secret or a pretty young woman demonstrating where to put birth control patches, etc.
- You may murder an unborn baby for any reason or no reason at all.
- Same sex marriage should be legal.
- Americans must adapt to immigrants, not immigrants to America.

The list is endless. I think this is the kind of business the Southern Baptist Convention should be concerned with at the next convention, or sooner if possible.

Preaching on this at Sunday services is good, but it is like

preaching to the choir. Like the Old Testament prophets, we should be addressing the people who run the country.

Gerald R. Robuck
Paris

USE GOD'S TACTICS

Editor:

The editorial, The Super Bowl of Sleaze, that appeared in the February 5 edition of The Baptist Record appears to have been written from the perspective of someone who viewed the program in its entirety. We may deplore and protest the flagrant display and glorification of homosexuality, rape, murder, disgusting commercials, and indecent exposure, but the best way to protest is to switch off the television set, assemble at church, and pray for God to help us stop the downward spiral of America into the gutter of immorality.

The same issue of the Record carried an article entitled, "NAMB, MBCB providing resources for film," referring to Mel Gibson's movie The Passion of the Christ, and had the following statement: "Other churches have Super Bowl parties each year, using this event as a bridge across which to share the Good News."

For some time now I have been of the opinion that a Master Bridge Builder built such a bridge a long time ago. Construction began on a Friday and concluded on Sunday following, and the bridge is still intact. If we use the tactics of the world, we will get what the

world provides. If we use the tactics of God, we will get what He provides. Hebrews 4:11-13 is still very true and appropriate!

V. Afton Anderson
Gulfport

UPSET AT SHOWING

Editor:

As an alumnus of William Carey College (WCC), I was astounded to read in The Baptist Record the details of the recent Homecoming. The theme, "Rocking Around the Clock" meant 50's rock music all weekend, poodle skirts, and leather jackets. The weekend began with a ride to the local Beverly Drive In Movie Theatre for a showing of Grease.

For those who may not know, Grease is a movie about a virginal girl who is ridiculed by the "cool" girls of the 50's until she gets with it and dresses wild and gives in to John Travolta. Then she's a hero. The actors make obscene gestures during the movie. The real star of the show is a wild girl who worries she may be pregnant.

Some of you may think I am prudish for getting upset at the showing of a "cute" show, but my dollars and yours help pay for it. If my other alma mater, New Orleans Seminary, had an Oldies weekend and showed Grease, (Seminary President Chuck) Kelly would be fired. Did WCC's president know and approve of this? I hope not.

I sent William Carey College a letter informing them I will not support them any more with that kind of behavior.

So the question is: Is William Carey College a liberal arts college that just happens to have a religion department (and gets financial support from the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board), or is it a Christian college? From what I see, I don't like the answer to that question.

Ralph Henson, pastor
Arrowood Church, Meridian

WITHDRAW NOW

Editor:

I recommend that the Southern Baptist Convention withdraw from the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) now. If your studies in the January 8 and January 22 issues reveal the true situation, there is no question about what needs to be done.

We either believe what the New Testament stands for or we don't. If we want to believe just parts of it, why should we believe any of it? We either stand on God's Word or we had better take a look at ourselves. If we won't stand firm on our beliefs as written in the New Testament, what Bible are we going to use?

We are for what the New Testament says or we are against it. We must believe all of it, not just the parts that meet our agenda. If the BWA wants to tell us what parts of the Bible to believe, let them go now. There is simply no justification for being a part of this organization.

Oran Frazier
Louisville

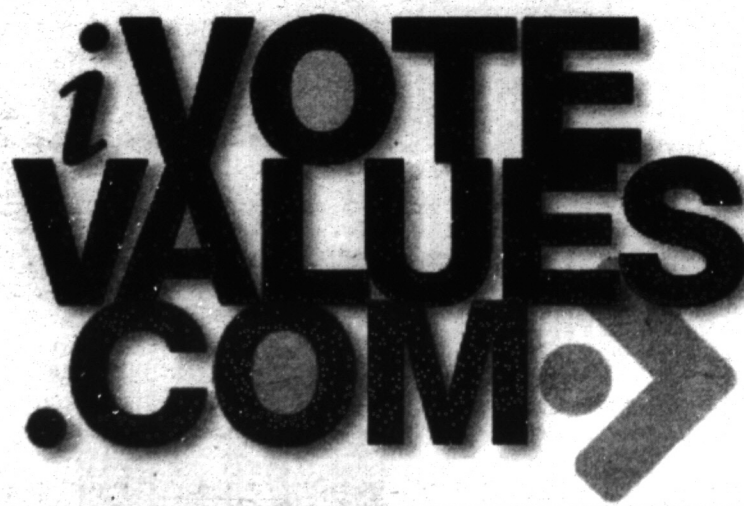
ERLC announces voter education program

NASHVILLE (BP) — The head of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) moral concerns and public policy entity believes the 2004 election may be one of the most pivotal elections in U.S. history. Thus, Richard Land told the SBC's Executive Committee, he is spearheading a voter education and registration drive to encourage Americans to vote their values, not their pocketbook, or their political party.

"I believe this election will be one of the most critical elections not just in my lifetime but in the lifetime of our republic," said Land, president of the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), on Feb. 16, adding it might well be the "most critical election since 1860." The 1860 election saw Abraham Lincoln defeat Stephen Douglas in a race that reflected the nation's bitter divide over slavery.

In underscoring the importance of the upcoming election, Land announced to the Executive Committee the launch of a far-reaching initiative, iVoteValues.com, to educate voters and register new voters.

The initiative, which seeks to "promote awareness of the immediate and long-term importance of values-based voting," will encourage people to register to vote and to make sure their friends and family members are registered to vote.



At the heart of the initiative is the push for voters to vote their values, Land said. The effort's yet-to-be-launched website, www.ivotevalues.com, lists those broad values as life, family, and freedom. The site eventually will offer voters a side-by-side comparison of the major presidential candidates' values, gleaned from their statements on key issues and their political party's platforms.

Among the issues that will be covered are abortion, fetal stem cell research, same-sex marriage, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the public display of the Ten Commandments. "It is absolutely critical that we impress upon [Southern Baptists] the need to be registered, to be informed and to vote their values," he said.

Christians have not only a right, but an obligation, to be involved in the political process, Land said.

"To be uninformed or to not be involved in the process is to be irresponsible and to become part of the problem rather than part of the solution," he said. The initiative calls on churches to mark Sunday, July 4, and Sunday, Sept. 26, as "National Voter Registration Days."

"We must make our voices heard. We must never try to tell people how to vote, but we should tell them that the Lord wants to talk to them about how they're going to vote, and the Lord is going to talk to them someday about how they voted," Land said.

The iVoteValues.com initiative, which will focus on encouraging churches to have registration rallies, will feature Jay Sekulow, chief counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice; Tony Perkins, President of Family Research Council; Ed Atsinger, the founder of Salem Communications Network; and others in appearances with Land across the country on behalf of the effort.

The website also will aid church leaders in discerning what type of political activity is and isn't legal in which a church can participate according to Internal Revenue Service regulations.

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Disciplined Service

Matt. 20:20-28; Romans 12:9-13

By Ken Anderson

The alarm rings at 3:30 A.M. in radio broadcaster Paul Harvey's 22-room home in suburban River Forest. His routine never varies: brush teeth, shower, shave, get dressed, eat oatmeal, get into car, and drive downtown. It all takes a well-organized 45 minutes or so. He dresses formally— in shirt, coat, and tie — as if going to work as the president of a bank, and in sharp contrast to the aggressively informal, sometimes slovenly manner common to most radio performers.

"It's all about discipline," Harvey says. "I could go to work in my pajamas; but long ago, I got some advice from the engineer for my friend, Billy Graham's, radio show. 'If you don't use discipline in every area, you'll lose your edge.'" (Good Days for Paul Harvey Chicago Tribune

Magazine (8-4-02) p. 10)

The place of discipline in one's life is indispensable. This is especially true in the Christian walk and in the life of the church.

The focus of this final lesson centers on disciplined service. The focal passages concentrate on believers becoming Christ-like by emulating His example of servanthood.

THE EXAMPLE OF SELFISHNESS MATTHEW 20:20-24:

The mother of James and John requested of Christ to place her sons in the chief places of power in His kingdom. The request was in the context of Christ's third announcement of His passion (20:17-19). The request revealed an astounding misunderstanding of Christ's death and His kingdom. It advanced the selfish spirit not only of the sons of Zebedee but of



Anderson

Peter's questions concerning rewards (19-27), and the power struggle among the other disciples (v. 24).

THE EXAMPLE OF SELFLESSNESS MATTHEW 20:25-28:

Christ responded with a question. "Are you able to able to drink of the cup that I drink?" Their affirmative response did not carry an understanding of Christ's meaning of the cup as suffering and death. Christ looked beyond their present disposition and agreed that in the future they would drink from His cup. Yet, as Christ's passion drew nearer, the disciples would reveal the weakness of their resolve (vs. 22-23).

Then, Christ gave the ultimate principle of selflessness and servanthood. The people clearly understood the power structure of Rome. In Rome, "Might made Right" and that Might placed the empire first and others were last. They also understood that their cultural structure was an ongoing struggle for power, position, and possessions. These were

used to lord over their fellow man. Christ's rule inverted this structure of society. The less desirable position of a suffering servant would be the one greatest for His disciples (vs. 25-27). Christ, Himself, exemplifies the role of a suffering servant (v. 28).

THE PRINCIPLES OF GENUINENESS ROMANS 12:9-13:

In Chapter 12, Paul dealt with the variety and use of spiritual gifts. He urged his readers not to think too highly of themselves (Romans 12:3). In this section, Paul listed twelve practical principles of Christian service. Selective to this study is that Christian love is sacrificial love. This goes beyond social graces and politeness; rather, it is a genuine Divine love that seeks the best for others without hypocrisy (v. 9-10). Disciplined Christian living includes ministering to the poor and needy and providing hospitality (v. 13).

INSIGHTS FROM THE TEXT:

Servanthood: The Greek word "servant" in the Matthew passages is "diakonos." It was a word used to

describe one who waits on tables, therefore the idea of a servant. The word has been transliterated to identify the church office of deacon. However, in a general sense, the word describes the servant ministry or service of all Christians.

Leadership: The lack of leadership eventually leads to chaos. However, the disciplined leader will be a servant leader. Leadership in Christ's kingdom is not related to rank, status, position, or power. It is a matter or function of serving people. This means there is an absence of superiority or lording over others and an active presence of partnership.

Motive: Christians should serve Christ primarily for the sake of divine love, not focusing on the potential for rewards. The supreme model of Christian service is Jesus.

Discipline: Achieving Christian discipline is not easy. It requires an active relationship with Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. It includes struggle, perseverance, and encouragement.

Anderson is pastor emeritus of First Church, Saltillo.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Manage Money Wisely

Proverbs 6:6-11; 14:23; 10:4; 18:9; 21:20; 17:18; 22:26-27; 22:7; 11:24-25; 22:9; 28:27; 19:17; 21:13

By Ann Maniscalco

Most American families have at least a couple of major credit cards; unwise use of this "plastic money" has brought headaches and heartaches to untold thousands. To learn to manage money wisely, the truths in today's lesson could be considered as credit cards of a sort we could call them "Mastery-cards" and "Discovery-cards." Truly, believers need to discover ways to master the money God entrusts to them.

Liberal sprinklings of additional Scriptures have been interposed with the focal passages for a more in-depth study I pray you will take time to meditate on the important truths they contain.

WORK DILIGENTLY (PROV. 6:6-11; 14:23; 10:4; 18:9):

God often reveals Himself in nature (Rom. 1:19-20), and here He

uses a tiny creature to relay powerful truths. The lazy person is instructed to study the ants activity. It's industriousness didn't require an overseer. Like Joseph, (Gen. 41:33-41,46-49), it used a time of plenty to "prepare" and "gather" (6:8) for a time of lack. Note the seasons "summer" and "harvest." Diligent labor during these times will help prepare us for life's winter, when we may be physically unable to work.

Solomon continues to spur the slacker to get up and get busy. Since God gives us "the power to get wealth" (Deut. 8:17-18 NKJV), not working due to laziness invites poverty. In Hebrew, the word for "profit" (14:23) means "plenteousness;" the word for "vandal"



Maniscalco

(18:9) denotes one who destroys. It is easy to see which honors God.

AVOID DEBT (PROV. 21:20; 17:18; 22:26-27; 22:7):

We've seen a person wasting time by not working, but a hard worker can also be a squanderer when he consumes his possessions wastefully. Debt has a stranglehold on many who haven't learned to "be content with what [they] have..." (Heb. 13:5 and 1 Tim. 6:6-10). Such a person is called a "foolish man" (21:20). The home of the wise contains what is needed, signified by "[p]recious treasure and oil."

Another foolish debt entanglement happens when one co-signs a loan for another (17:18). We may feel sorry for the person because he doesn't have adequate credit in his own name, and we want to help. Often, this compounds the person's financial instability, and when he can't pay, the one who co-signed the loan will be responsible for it. If someone

has agreed to such, Proverbs 6:1-5 says he is to do all he can to get out of the agreement.

The last verse in this section should be taped to our checkbook and charge cards! Truly, when we are indebted to anyone, they become our ruler, and we become their slave. This may seem a bit far-fetched, but think about it. The amount of our debt obligations be it credit card debt or car and house notes — is the amount that is not freed up for other uses. The lender gains controls over our spending decisions for such things as household necessities, leisure activities, and even our giving. Consider this in light of Jesus teaching on the inability to serve two masters (Matt. 6:24).

GIVE GENEROUSLY (PROV. 11:24-25; 22:9; 28:27; 19:17; 21:13):

Establishing a good work ethic and avoiding indebtedness will enable believers to bless others with their generosity. The scriptural principle of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:7) saturates these verses. He who gives, receives; he who blesses others will be blessed. Since the

Lord has compassion on the poor, the one who cares for them will enjoy God's favor, but he who ignores their needs will "receive many curses" (28:27) and their prayers will go unanswered (21:13).

LESSON REFLECTIONS:

Sometimes we grasp our possessions a bit too tightly. Let's examine what will eventually happen to these worldly goods: Moths, rust and thieves can cause their destruction and disappearance (Matt. 6:19-21); someone will inherit them (Eccl. 2:18-19); in the "day of the Lord" (2 Peter 3:10-12), they will be burned up. Those thoughts should adjust our perspective.

However, God does endow us financially to meet our needs and to bless others. (Malachi 3:10 and 2 Cor. 9:6-11). If we hold these assets with open, uplifted hands, we'll be in the best position for the Lord, according to Luke 6:38, to give us a "good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over...." I think I like God's financial plan best!

Maniscalco is member of First Church, Ocean Springs.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half-inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing,

and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or objectively photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs may be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 797-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbc.org

THE BAPTIST
Record

Graham calls for SBC name change

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Jack Graham has called for a new name for the denomination and will appoint a committee to study the idea.

Graham made his proposal during his presidential address to the SBC Executive Committee Feb. 16. He said he will appoint a committee in the coming weeks to report back to the 2005 SBC annual meeting in Nashville, Tenn. The committee will represent the SBC both "geographically and generationally," he said.

Graham said the name change would reflect the fact that Southern Baptists are a nationwide and worldwide body of believers. "Why am I suggesting and recommending this name [change]?" he asked. "Why would we do this? Only one reason, and that is to strengthen and lengthen our witness here in America and around the world. Why would we do this? Because people are wounded, people don't know Jesus, and we are determined to do whatever it takes to connect with our culture and our country and the continents of the earth."

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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WPWFK OCFV CX YCV

SN LQFW: RW SN G

NRSWAV QDEC ERWB

ERGE LQE ERWSF

EFQNE SD RSB.

LFCPWFFHN ERSFEK: XSPW

Clue: K = W

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Isaiah 55:11

Analysis: Ten timely questions about Jesus

By Don Whitney
Correspondent

Judging by ticket sales and media attention, Mel Gibson's movie *The Passion of The Christ* is going to be one of the most popular and controversial films of our time. These questions will help in thinking through the movie or in discussing it with others:

• *Do you know why Jesus had to die?* When learning from *The Passion of The Christ* the facts about Jesus' suffering and crucifixion, it's essential to understand the reason for it. One of the most important of the many reasons given in the Bible why Jesus had to die was to receive the wrath of God in the place of others.

"For all have sinned," God says in Romans 3:23 — and because God is just and holy, He must punish those who have sinned. But because He also is loving, He was willing to send His Son Jesus to take the hammer blow of His wrath so that others might receive His mercy. When Jesus allowed Himself to be spiked onto that wooden cross, He was accepting God's curse so that sinners could receive God's blessings forever.

As Galatians 3:13 puts it, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us — for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.'"

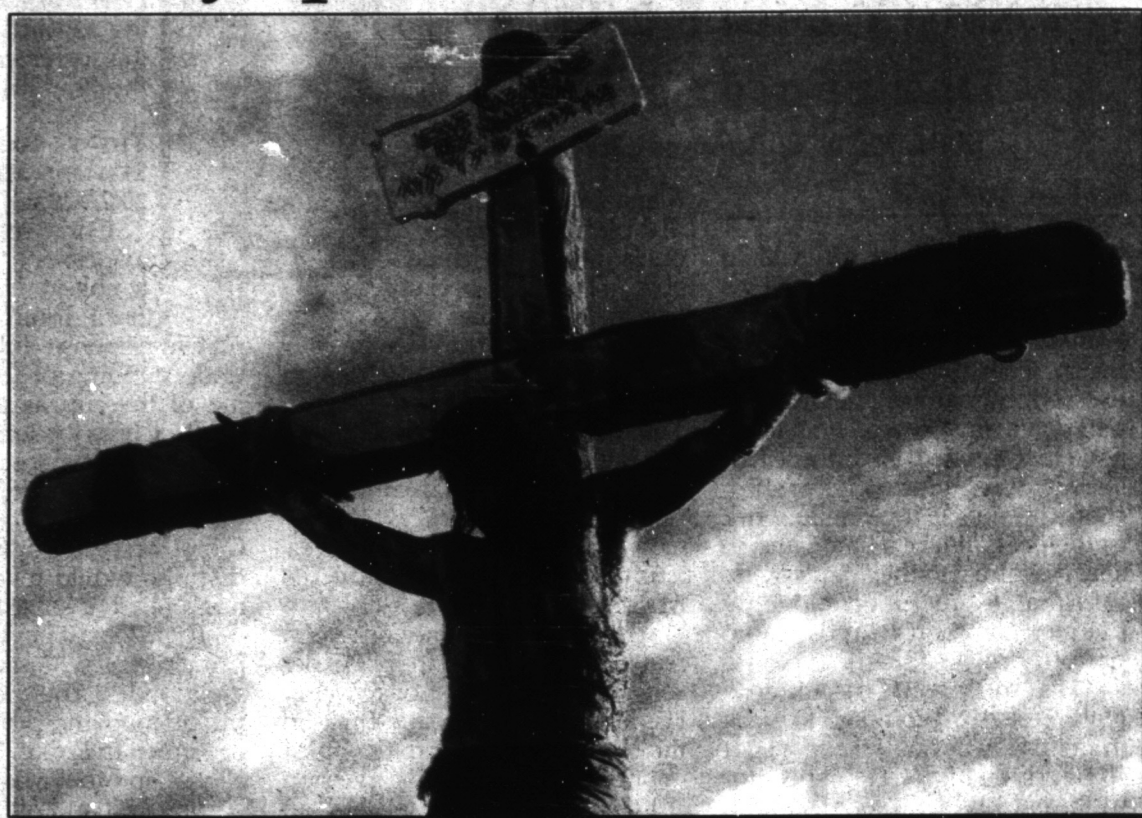
• *Do you know who really killed Jesus?* There is no single, earthly source to blame for killing Jesus. The Jewish religious leaders hated Jesus, so they arrested Him and delivered Him to the Roman official, Pontius Pilate, for execution. Pilate could have released Jesus, but he, too, shares responsibility because he succumbed to the influence of yet a third party who contributed to the death of Jesus, the crowd in Jerusalem who kept shouting, "Crucify Him!" (Matthew 27:23).

In the end, however, it was sinners like me and you who killed Jesus. "While we were yet sinners," the Apostle Paul tells us, "Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). No one can point a finger at any other person or group for the death of Jesus. Our sins were the reason Jesus had to be crucified.

• *Do you understand the role that God the Father played in the death of Jesus?* Ultimately, it was God the Father who killed His Son, Jesus. The Bible clearly says that Jesus was "delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). Jesus did not die by mistake. Although our sins made Jesus' death necessary, God brought it to pass. So in God's sending Jesus to receive His wrath so others could receive eternal life, sinners are saved from God, by God.

• *Do you realize why Jesus' death was different from the death of everyone else in history?* The death of Jesus was unique because His life was unique. Since Jesus never sinned, He never had to die. He chose to die, and because Jesus never broke the law of God, He could die as a substitute for lawbreakers. As 2 Corinthians 5:21 explains, God the Father "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

• *Do you know why Jesus cried from the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* (Matthew 27:46)? When God in His justice laid the crushing guilt of sinners



ACTOR'S AGONY — Actor Jim Caviezel underwent severe physical and emotional strain to portray Jesus in the upcoming film *The Passion of the Christ*. His prayer is that viewers look past him and grasp the film's message. "Every one of us is to be blamed for the death of Jesus," he said. (BP photo courtesy of A. Larry Ross)

upon Jesus, God in His holiness then had to reject His own Son as a sinner. As Jesus was suspended between earth and heaven, the prophecy of Isaiah 53:10 was fulfilled: "But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief if He would render Himself as a guilt offering."

• *Do you know why Jesus' last words were, "It is finished" (John 19:30)?* Because of His love, God sent Jesus to be the propitiation — the wrath-taker — for the sins of people who did not yet love Him. "In this is love," 1 John 4:10 says, "not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Once He had taken our guilt and God's punishment, Jesus triumphantly declared to His Father, "It is finished," and died.

• *Do you see the relationship between Jesus' death and His resurrection?* The resurrection of Jesus vindicates all His claims. Anyone could claim, as Jesus did, to be the only way to God (John 14:6), but Jesus substantiated this and all His other claims by doing something no one else has ever done: rising from the dead, never to die again.

Moreover, by not leaving Jesus in the grave, God showed that He accepted His Son's death as a substitute for the death of others. The Bible is plain that the cross of Jesus, without the resurrection, would have meant, "your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17). "But now Christ has been raised from the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:20), as proof that Jesus' death in the place of sinners satisfied the requirements of God's justice.

• *Do you realize what the death of Jesus can do for you that you cannot do for yourself?* First among many things is this: The death of Jesus can make you righteous in the sight of God. No amount of good that we do can atone for our sins or earn us a place in heaven and if we die without receiving the benefit of Jesus' death, the wrath of God will fall on us forever.

Conversely, the Bible speaks of those who have experienced the benefit of the cross as those who have "been justified by

His blood," and declares that they "shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him" (Romans 5:9). To be "justified" means more than having all sins forgiven.

It also means to be given credit for living the perfect life Jesus lived. Only a perfect life earns entrance into a perfect world with a perfect God, and only through the death of Jesus can we get the perfect life of Jesus that we need to enter heaven.

• *Do you understand the central message of this movie?* Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God, was crucified as a substitute for sinners, and He rose from the dead to be King over everyone and everything forever.

• *Do you know the biblical response to the message of The Passion of The Christ?* It's summarized in one of the best-known and best-loved verses in the Bible: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Many people will have deep, but merely temporary, emotional responses to *The Passion of The Christ*. May the Lord grant you to find in the greatest evil ever committed — the death of Jesus — the greatest, richest, and most satisfying blessing ever offered: God Himself.

Whitney, whose analysis appears courtesy of Baptist Press, is associate professor of spiritual formation at Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri.

He is the author of several books, including *How Can I Be Sure I'm a Christian?* (NavPress, 1994). This article and many others can be downloaded as a free bulletin insert at his website, www.SpiritualDisciplines.org.

